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and **Soil Water Conservation** NEWS

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Soil
Conservation
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**Resource Conservation
and Development**

Focus on Diversity, Pages 11-14

Cover: The Castlelands RC&D Area has many wondrous scenes such as this landscape in rural southeastern Utah. A related story on page 21 describes a Soil Conservation Service program that will use landscape design in specific projects to enhance the environment and economy. (Ron Nichols photo)

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Comments from the SCS Chief:

Bringing New Life to Rural Areas

All the wonderful programs and projects in the world aren't likely to succeed without the kind of people who make things happen. We are fortunate to have just such people contributing their time to our Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) areas.

Most everyone professes concern about the quality of life in our rural areas. Citizens want to do something about such things as soil erosion, old or nonexistent community facilities, loss of jobs, and lack of natural outdoor recreation areas for young people.

RC&D provides a framework for dealing with some of these issues through citizen participation. RC&D is as much a way of doing things—a process—as it is a program. It exemplifies the neighborly approach: RC&D is run by the people who live in the areas it serves, and they set the priorities for their communities. People who volunteer for RC&D activities are those who believe that one person can make a difference.

RC&D councils are organized locally and voluntarily by county and local public agencies, such as soil and water conservation districts, and nonprofit organizations. Once formed, a council applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for authorization to establish an RC&D area, which usually covers several counties. SCS then assigns a coordinator to the area, to assist the sponsors.

RC&D offers technical and limited financial assistance—and, occasionally, loans—to rural communities for measures that conserve and improve use of land and develop natural resources in an environmentally sound way. Typical RC&D projects include developing new markets for crops, livestock, and forest products; helping farmers diversify their crops; developing recreation facilities and promoting tourism; encouraging local employment through expansion of existing industries and attraction of new ones; and improving community facilities such as schools, hospitals, libraries, and fire houses.

We've been hearing a lot lately about empowerment—giving people the authority to make important decisions affecting their lives. Well, the RC&D program has been empowering rural people for nearly 30 years. It was authorized by Congress in 1962 and strengthened in the 1981 farm bill. Over the past 5 years, the scope of the RC&D program has broadened in response to USDA's rural development initiatives.

I'm pleased that SCS—through the RC&D program—can be a catalyst for action. But, the real credit goes to the many residents who are helping to make their communities better places in which to live.



Chief

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Creating Industries

Turn-Key, Full Circle Help Iowa Forests

THE GEODE Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Executive Board is urging the planting of more trees on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres. The board's major

concern centers on what will happen to land now enrolled in CRP when the program expires.

The board's forestry committee recommended that the RC&D work towards a goal of getting trees planted on more CRP areas, since it will take a longer period before the trees can be harvested.

"Prior to 1986, only one-half of 1 percent of all CRP land in the Geode RC&D area was planted to trees," said Sherman Smith, RC&D committee chairman.

Soil survey data indicate that 76 percent of soils in the Geode RC&D are suitable for growing black walnut, red oak, and white oak.

Smith's committee recommended

and the board decided that soil conservation and establishment of a new industry could be accomplished together.

The board established a goal of getting 10 percent of the CRP land planted with walnut or oak. To reach that goal, the Geode board adopted a forestry program that included an accelerated tree planting service—called Turn-Key Tree Planting—and a management service of woodland resources—called Full Circle Forestry.

Turn-Key Tree Planting is a model of purchased services needed in an age of specialized agriculture and absentee ownership. Landowners in southeastern Iowa



Turn-Key Tree Planting, involving accelerated tree planting of walnuts and oaks, is part of the forestry services offered landowners participating in the Conservation Reserve Program in southeastern Iowa by the Geode RC&D Area council. (Geode RC&D Area photo)

say they have to concentrate their time on agricultural production, rather than planting and managing woodlands. This program offers a means whereby landowners can get the help they need.

In Turn-Key, the RC&D offers a 5-year contract to landowners to carry out accelerated tree planting on marginal, open land (such as CRP land) to ensure a future supply of high-quality timber products. Geode contracts with professionals to carry out cover seeding, tree planting, herbicidal application, and mowing. The landowner pays a flat rate for these services. Forestation plans need approval

by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Division of Forestry.

During 1988, trees were planted on 214 acres, and in 1989, 285 more acres were planted. In 1990, nearly 700 acres were planted to hardwoods and a few acres to conifers.

Full Circle Forestry had its birth in July 1989 following a grant from the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and additional assistance from SCS. During the fall of 1989, Geode hired a professional forester, Bob Petrzeka, to manage the entire forestry program.

Landowners can obtain a comprehensive package that includes forest management (pruning, thinning, and harvesting) and timber

marketing techniques. Landowners must reinvest part of their sale proceeds in reforesting harvested timberland areas.

Initially, nearly 1,000 woodland owners in Des Moines, Henry, Lee, and Louisa Counties will be contacted as part of the Full Circle program. These landowners control nearly 150,000 acres of woodland. The program can be a model that other RC&D areas can study for their possible use.

Ron Snyder, Geode RC&D coordinator, SCS, Burlington, Iowa

RC&D Helps 'Design' Wood Bikes In Arkansas

WOODEN, decorative bicycles and gun cabinets, made from Arkansas lumber, are two new products that resulted from an East Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area project.

In the fall of 1990, the RC&D council discovered that the only real market for timber in the north-

eastern part of the State was firewood.

"At that time, firewood sales were making up less than 1 percent of the potential timber market," said Charles Smart, a retired business leader from Piggott, Ark., and chairman of the RC&D council. "Our RC&D council knew the resource had much potential."

So Smart obtained a \$40,000 grant through the USDA Forest Service to help a local business, Design Concepts, into full production. Design Concepts owner Jerry Philips used the money to purchase more equipment, promote finished products, and recruit and train new personnel. He hired seven additional employees in 1990.

"Our main product is wooden shutters made from hardwoods,"

said Philips. "Among the new products now available are the decorative wooden bicycles and gun cabinets. By helping our company, which just celebrated its first anniversary, the East Arkansas RC&D has helped the economy in the area."

Smart believes that every RC&D council has opportunities to help small business people like Jerry Philips launch companies that will provide employment opportunities in the communities as well as raise the standard of living for the residents.

Suzanne Pugh, public affairs specialist, SCS, Little Rock, Ark.

"It's a warmer heat, and it's constant. Using the wood pellet stove probably cut our heating bill in half."

Missouri RC&D's Urge Wood Pellet Conversion

TIMBER IS BIG business in the Ozarks. But the sawdust byproduct of sawmill operations has been a nuisance.

Now, thanks to a wood pellet stove rebate program—\$500 to each purchaser of an approved wood pellet stove—sponsored by the Top of the Ozarks, the Big Springs, and the Southwest Missouri Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Councils, sawmill operators can look forward to taking the "by" out of byproduct.

"We estimate that over 6,000 tons of sawdust are produced weekly here," said Frank Farmer, State RC&D association president. "Creating a market for wood pellets could entice a wood pellet production company to open a plant in the region.

"Since wood pellets are made from compressed sawdust, a new market would be born. In essence, a byproduct would become a product."

To create the demand for pellets, the three RC&D councils wanted to install 400 pellet-burning stoves throughout 41 southern Missouri counties during the 1989 and 1990 heating seasons. More than 100 people have received en-

RC&D's: The Areas, Councils, and Projects

The Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program is a Federal rural development program run by people who live in the areas it serves. It was established by the Food and Agriculture Act of 1962 to help local units of government conserve and properly use natural resources in solving local problems.

Each RC&D area usually covers several counties and is run by a council (or board) representing the sponsoring organizations—county governments, soil and water conservation districts, towns, water districts, and other nonprofit groups. Council members commonly include farmers, ranchers, bankers, politicians, homemakers, environmentalists, and others who volunteer time to help solve local problems.

The council in each area is assisted by an RC&D coordinator, a U.S. Department of Agriculture employee whose job it is to "make things happen."

In southeastern Iowa, for instance, the Geode RC&D Execu-

tive Board wanted to conserve soil and water by planting more trees on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands. The board:

- Formed a task force of people from USDA and State and local organizations who held brain-storming sessions at three meetings to devise an action plan;
- Listed who would take responsibility for each phase of action: cost charges, services provided, work guarantees, and site preparation and tree planting operations;
- Developed a plan of goals, objectives, and strategies to implement Turn-Key Tree Planting; and
- Turned over implementation to the RC&D coordinator and the district forester, and hired a forestry consultant.

These are just some of the actions representing how one RC&D area handled one project. Every project is different and requires different board actions.

Ron Page, national RC&D coordinator, SCS, Washington, D.C.

ergy-saver rebates from the State so far. Funding for the State rebates comes from the U.S. Department of Energy, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Mary Mattingly, owner of Country Quilts in Van Buren, Mo., likes the pellet stove she purchased.

"It's a warmer heat, and it's constant. Using the wood pellet stove probably cut our heating bill in half."

She says her shop stays cleaner since switching to pellet fuel. Pellets create almost no wood ash or smoke, and there is no creosote buildup.

Mattingly says she believes in the efficiency of a wood pellet stove. The three RC&D councils in southern Missouri hope to make believers out of a lot more people.

Charlie Rahm, public affairs specialist, SCS, Columbia, Mo.

RC&D Begins Louisiana Industry

WHEN HE first heard that Louisiana imported baled pine straw for landscaping use, Danny Clement exclaimed, "That's crazy! This State has over 7 million acres of pine land; why are we importing pine straw?"

A new Louisiana industry began with Clement's reaction. As Capital Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) council coordinator, Clement suggested that his council try to start a commercial pine-straw enterprise.

The council, organized with the assistance of the Soil Conservation Service, did not yet have specific goals. But the project was in line with its mission of rural economic development and appeared to have good potential.

In his travels as coordinator, Clement had noticed that pine-straw mulch was sold commercially in the area by Harvey Heintz, known to many local people as the "Straw Boss." At Clement's urging, Heintz became an RC&D council member and helped promote the pine-straw industry in Louisiana.

In December 1986, Heintz and Clement got 40 forestry and business experts together to discuss how they could establish the industry. That meeting resulted in a plan of action that today con-



Commercial baling of pine straw in Louisiana has increased, thanks to the State's resource conservation and development councils. (D. Clement photo)

tinues to guide the industry's development.

"In the early phase of the industry's development, establishing credibility was the challenge," noted Heintz. "People had trouble believing pine straw was a viable industry."

A turning point came early in 1989 through a contact that the Capital RC&D Council made with a major North Carolina pine-straw producer. All the RC&D councils in Louisiana—Capital, Trailblazer, and Twin Valley—worked with the producer and the USDA's Forest Service to make large tracts of long-leaf pine available for a pilot pine-straw harvesting project.

The councils held a rural media field day and demonstration of this project in May 1989. Over 100 people attended the event, and several potential producers expressed interest in the business.

In July 1989, producers and others willing to support the new industry formed a group that later

became known as the Louisiana Pine Straw Association.

Said Association President Tom Reinhart, "Our 60-member group is dedicated to producing a high-quality Louisiana product, and selling it at a reasonable price. The State's RC&D network will provide administrative support until the association can move out on its own."

Figures show the progress of the industry. "In 1990, Louisiana pine-straw producers netted almost \$163,000 selling about 45,750 bales," said Dr. Robert Mills, forestry specialist for the State's Co-operative Extension Service. "By the end of 1991, I project that producers will sell 10 percent more bales of pine straw than in 1990."

The pride of the Louisiana RC&D councils grows along with the industry they sparked into being.

Herb Bourque, public affairs specialist, SCS, Alexandria, La.

Crossroads RC&D recently received assistance and grants worth \$75,000 to help the cooperatives promote wholesale market development.

Ohio Trees For Ohio Christmases

“WHEN WE found out that two out of every three Christmas trees sold in Ohio were from out of State, the Crossroads Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area began investigating how to get people to buy Ohio-grown Christmas trees,” said Edgar Wallace, RC&D council chairman.

As a result, the Carroll Christmas Tree Growers Association—Ohio’s first Christmas tree cooperative—was established in 1987 with RC&D assistance, and the Muskingum Valley Christmas Tree Growers Association—Ohio’s second Christmas tree cooperative—was established in 1988. Both have proved successful because of

their cooperative spirit, leadership, and striving for quality.

Crossroads RC&D recently received assistance and grants worth \$75,000 to help the cooperatives promote wholesale market development.

Membership of landowners in the Carroll association has grown to 50 in just 3 years. During the 1989 season, the association sold 5,000 cut trees; in the 1990 season, they sold 4,000 cut trees and \$20,000 worth of balled and dug trees. This association serves

growers in six counties in east-central Ohio.

In the Muskingum association, membership has also reached 50. The association serves Christmas tree growers in 12 counties in southeastern Ohio. In 1989, the association sold 600 cut trees; in 1990, the association sold over 1,500 cut trees.

The Soil Conservation Service provides information and technical assistance to association members. The council’s efforts have also led to USDA’s Agricultural Co-

operative Service opening a field office in 1990 in Columbus, Ohio, to assist cooperatives throughout the State.

The Carroll and Muskingum associations plan to expand their 1991 marketing season to carve out a larger share of potential Christmas tree sales for their growers. Some growers even plan to stock deciduous trees and other landscape plants to expand the potential for sales

throughout the year.

Nancy Tressel, Crossroads RC&D secretary, SCS, Zoar, Ohio



Tree growers belonging to Ohio’s first Christmas tree cooperative attend training sessions offered by the cooperative on members’ tree plantations. Crossroads RC&D Area Council helped organize Ohio’s Christmas tree cooperatives. (Robert Drown photo)

Improving Recreation

Kansas Lake Benefits Recreation, Economy

FROM SETTLEMENT times to today, residents of Coldwater, Kans., dreamed of turning a nearby spring into a sizable, dependable reservoir.

In 1980, town residents achieved that goal through the efforts of the Sunflower Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council. What they did not foresee was the tremendous benefit the facility would be to their town. The lake reservoir is realizing more than twice the benefits the experts predicted.

Coldwater is a depressed small community in southwestern Kansas, in a county with less than 3,000 people. The lake has put the area on the map with more visitors discovering the area each year.

Coldwater Mayor Cleo Bliss related that the city set user fees for park recreation. "We have been able to collect between \$30,000 and \$50,000 each year," said Bliss.



Coldwater Lake has over a hundred campsites, many with electric and water hookups. (Tim Christian photo)

"This is almost twice what we had anticipated." The money offset park maintenance costs and allowed the town to install restrooms, showers, shelters, campsites, and roads in park improvements.

Downtown Coldwater also benefited. "It saved a local grocery store," Bliss noted. "The store burned down several years ago and probably wouldn't have been rebuilt but for the traffic generated by the lake."

Today a new grocery store serves the region, even staying open evenings and Sundays. Because of purchases by lake visitors, some from neighboring

Oklahoma and Colorado, other businesses prosper and the area enjoys a stable economy. In fact, it is estimated that \$75,000 to \$100,000 annually in additional money is brought to the area by visitors.

Kansans enjoy boating, fishing, swimming, windsurfing, and water skiing on clear Coldwater Lake. All in all, they have seen their dream turn into a pleasant reality.

Tim Christian, public affairs specialist, SCS, Salina, Kans.

RC&D and Grand Tower Park Board officials also used their ingenuity and resourcefulness—"I called in every IOU that I could think of to get the job done," said Fred Houston.

Illinois Tames Devil's Backbone

GRAND TOWER, Ill., a small, historic river town about 100 miles south of St. Louis, on the mighty Mississippi, has a quiet charm and personality. It also has a local landmark to attract tourists and campers, the Devil's Backbone ridge in Grand Tower Park.

To capitalize on these features and attract more tourists, the Shawnee Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Council, along with the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Grand Tower Township Park District, began a

project to provide additional camping facilities, attract vacationing campers and tourists, and get these visitors to stay longer in the area.

Funds available were minimal, so the park district used "Performance of Work" cost sharing, under which they did a certain part of the work and were paid a predetermined fee. The park board's regular staff and other labor sources did the construction work.

RC&D and Grand Tower Park Board officials also used their ingenuity and resourcefulness—"I called in every IOU that I could think of to get the job done," said Fred Houston, the secretary of the Grand Tower Park Board.

The council and the park board obtained materials from local merchants and received discounts on other needed materials. They recruited volunteers to do carpentry and concreting work in the shel-

ters. They recruited the high school baseball team to build a hiking trail. And they used a U.S. Navy construction battalion unit to build the shower facility.

The project included building 60 wooden picnic tables, a hiking trail with two overlooks along the Devil's Backbone, 23 trailer pads with electric and water hookups, a shower facility, a camper "dump station," a 20- by 40-foot picnic shelter, tree plantings, over 2,000 feet of surface drainage, and 3,000 feet of road improvements. Water fountains and other facilities are handicapped-accessible.

Moneys collected from camping and other park uses have tripled without any price increases. Even more dramatic is the increase in money spent by tourists in this rural town with limited resources.

The Grand Tower project resulted in an increased local pride and interest in the community. This total community effort exemplified what RC&D can do to help people.

Gary L. Jennings, former district conservationist, SCS, Murphysboro, Ill.; currently an RC&D coordinator in Durango, Colo.



Tourist day and overnight use increased markedly since trailer pads, showers, picnic sites, and other recreational assets were installed in Grand Tower Park in Illinois. (SCS photo)

Focus on Diversity

Framework For Change

IN NOVEMBER 1990, the Soil Conservation Service conducted a Work Force Diversity Conference in Sparks, Nev. The conference focused on the need for diversifying our work force.

The U.S. Department of Labor estimates that by the year 2000, women, minorities, and immigrants will account for about 80 percent of U.S. labor force growth. To reflect this change in the work force, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has created "Framework for Change." This is a work force diversification program structured to help USDA agencies adjust to the demographic changes taking place.

In response to "Framework for Change" and the current trends, SCS conference participants met for 3 days to address key issues and concerns. Employees from all grade levels, ethnic/cultural backgrounds, and disciplines participated in workshop discussions to come up with suggestions and recommendations to facilitate diversification at all levels. Several speakers discussed multicultural diversity, cultural awareness, and sensitivity towards human resources.

Adis Vila, then USDA Assistant Secretary for Administration, spoke about the "Framework for Change" and the need to take on full responsibility in meeting the challenge of diversifying our work force. "Lack of diversity hurts our ability to serve the American public fully and to help American farmers find new markets for their products abroad," Vila said.



At the Work Force Diversity Conference, SCS employees from all grade levels, ethnic/cultural backgrounds, and disciplines participated in workshop discussions. (SCS photo)

As a result of this workshop, recommendations on a strategy for diversifying the SCS work force will be made to Chief William Richards.

Although many of the conference participants Vila talked with considered it a great success, the conference is only a steppingstone along the way to work force diversification. Among the highlights of the conference was the introduction of SCS Chief Richards, who expressed his commitment to work force diversity and promised support in meeting the challenge.

Daniel Portillo, National Planning Committee member, Work Force Diversity, SCS, Fort Worth, Tex.

USDA Employees With Disabilities Form Association

SOIL CONSERVATION Service employee Sandra King and Tom Baughman, national SCS selective placement program manager, were instrumental in the creation of the

Association For Persons With Disabilities In Agriculture.

The association's mission is to advocate employment and advancement of persons with disabilities in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This group has been a major addition to the many diverse voices that make up the USDA employee community.

By sponsoring this association, SCS hopes to :

- Educate and promote awareness among administrators, managers, and employees about the needs and concerns of people with disabilities;
- Identify and help eliminate barriers to fair employment in USDA; and
- Sponsor activities that will help USDA employees and job applicants with disabilities acquire skills and knowledge for employment and career opportunities.

"We are developing a strategic plan to extend the program to individuals at the State level," said King.

This section on Diversity was prepared by Gayle Schwarzkopf, public affairs intern, SCS, Bozeman, Mont.

Pennsylvania, Caribbean Exchange Employees

SOIL CONSERVATION Service officials in Pennsylvania had no Hispanic employees in their offices, but they wanted to recruit qualified candidates. To accomplish this, State Conservationist Richard Duncan and Humberto Hernandez, director for SCS in the Caribbean area, worked together to help Pennsylvania add Hispanic employees to its work force.

Duncan and Hernandez developed an exchange employment program to promote work force diversity in Pennsylvania and the Caribbean area, which includes Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"The program's purpose," said Duncan, "is to promote cultural awareness and increase employees' knowledge of different types of agriculture."

Through the exchange program, Pennsylvania employees could get a taste of Caribbean culture and learn more about agriculture in

tropical climates. Likewise, employees from the Caribbean area could learn more about North American culture and agriculture.

Because of the success of this program, SCS in Pennsylvania now has three permanent, full-time Hispanic employees.

In addition, two Pennsylvania SCS employees are now working on a detail in St. Croix, the U.S. Virgin Islands, performing conservation duties.

Sylvia Rainford, public affairs specialist, SCS, Harrisburg, Pa.

African-American Cultural Awareness

ACTING ON a recommendation of the Equal Opportunity Advisory Committee, officials of the Soil Conservation Service in Minnesota are carrying out African-American cultural awareness activities throughout 1991. Each SCS office will take part in several special activities, rather than merely noting African-American History Month with a bulletin and a poster. These activities include:

- An African-American history question-of-the-week during February;
- Showing of the video "Eye to Eye," which discusses racism exhibited through an innovative elementary classroom exercise developed by Jane Elliott;
- Special presentations; for example, Bill Stokes, SCS economist

in St. Paul, Minn., presented "What It Was Like as an African-American Growing Up in America" to SCS State, area, and field office employees;

- A private viewing of "I Dream A World—Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America" at the Minnesota Museum of Art;
- 1 year's subscription to *Ebony* magazine for each area office and the State office; and
- Circulation of newspaper and magazine articles that relate to African-American culture in Minnesota.

David Benner, deputy State conservationist, SCS, St. Paul, Minn.



Through an SCS exchange program, Hispanic employees, such as Noel Soto, are able to learn about North American culture and agriculture while working in Pennsylvania.



Under the Cooperative Education Program, SCS hires b backgrounds to work in the summer and/or part-time c

Demonstration Project Benefits Native Americans

IN ARIZONA, SCS has a special pilot demonstration project underway to provide assistance to the Gila River Indian Community. This project is designed to expose Native Americans to current conservation technology.

The 3-year project will provide information through workshops and onsite demonstrations to increase knowledge of farming methods, provide technical assistance, provide cost-sharing on selected fields, and complete an irrigation project. The project also will reduce water use, improve soil con-



Pool and college students from culturally diverse school year in Montana.

ditions, and increase the rate of economic gain for the farmers involved in the project area.

In California, SCS has initiated a similar pilot demonstration project to assist Asian-American farmers in Yuba City.

Students Gain Work Experience

RECRUITING TOP-NOTCH college students is not a new concept for most employers. But with the pool of potential candidates decreasing, especially in agriculture, getting the best is increasingly difficult, according to Dick Gooby, State conservationist for the Soil Conservation Service in Montana.

Under the Cooperative Education Program, SCS hires both high school and college students from culturally diverse backgrounds to work in the summer and/or part-time during the school year.

When these students finish college, they are assured employment with the agency. Most students will become soil conservationists, but they have the opportunity to explore other areas of work such as engineering, administration, snow surveys, and public affairs.

SCS is recognizing the changing work force, Gooby said. Current civilian labor force figures show that 60 percent of the work force is now male and 40 percent is female. This cooperative program has increased the percentage of female employees in Montana SCS from 14 percent to 36 percent in 4 years.

Lori Bredow, public affairs specialist, SCS, Bozeman, Mont.

Disabled, SCS Benefit from Work Agreement

AN AGREEMENT between the Soil Conservation Service and the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is helping disabled persons ease their way back into the work force.



Dana Duncan is one of the disabled persons that SCS signed up as a volunteer to work in a field office in Missouri. (Charlie Rahm photo)

Under the memorandum of cooperation, SCS signs disabled persons up as volunteers, assigning them to work in one of the offices SCS has in each applicable county.

Ted Cox, district supervisor of the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, said that the on-the-job training that the volunteers receive—in addition to formal education at local colleges—will strengthen their qualifications for future jobs.

Charlie Rahm, public affairs specialist, SCS, Columbia, Mo.

October Highlights National Disability Employment Awareness Month

OCTOBER IS National Disability Employment Awareness Month. This month is set aside to recognize employers and other organizations that have consistently and outstandingly provided employment opportunities for people who are disabled.

It salutes the achievements of people with disabilities who are contributing to their communities and to society through their jobs.

October is a time to set up awareness programs to help the public understand that negative attitudes, not disabilities, are the primary factor keeping people with disabilities from leading independent and productive lives.

This is a time to celebrate our diverse work force!

A Welcome Asset To Louisiana

"A MAN of vision" is one way to describe L. Whitlock, Jr., of the Bear Wallow Community in northeast Louisiana. He had the foresight to know that education, along with a deep belief in God, was needed to help him be successful in life.

So, the former sharecropper, who likes to be called L, and his wife Leola worked at all kinds of jobs to raise and educate 13 children. And, educate them they did. All 13 graduated from college!

The Whitlocks own 67 acres of

Hispanic Partners Program Established

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to improve recruitment and employment opportunities for students from member schools by USDA.

"This agreement demonstrates our commitment to the development of activities that will lead to a greater participation of Hispanic students in Federal programs," said then Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter at the signing of the MOU.

The Hispanic Partners Program MOU provides for a committee to

advise USDA and HACU. The committee will recommend policies, procedures, programs, and services to improve the scope and quality of educational programs and career-related activities.

USDA will provide information concerning employment needs, assist HACU in developing relevant curricula, and conduct career fairs and other recruitment activities.

Recruitment of a diversified work force is of key importance in meeting the work force requirements of the Nation in the 21st century and in improving the educational success rates of Hispanic youth.

farmland about 10 miles south of Lake Providence, La., near the Mississippi River. The land has been good to them, but they also have been good to the land. Not only did the Whitlocks know that educating their children was important, they also knew that if you took care of the land in the right way, it would take care of you.

"I've always loved the land," said Whitlock. "It's been hard working the soil for 45 years. But, it also has been rewarding, knowing that you're producing food and fiber and preserving something for future use."

Whitlock has been conservation minded as long as he can remember, he says. Recently, his conservation ethic paid off. He was elected the newest supervisor of the East Carroll Soil and Water Conservation District, and he's proud of it.

Because of Whitlock's conservation work on his land, he was named the Black Conservation Farmer of the Year for 1991 in East Carroll Parish.

"He's helped to promote soil conservation work in the area and is a worthy recipient of the recent conservation award," said John Rogers, district conservationist in Lake Providence.

Louisiana's newest district supervisor is indeed a man of vision: a hard working man who loves his church, his family, and the land. L. Whitlock, Jr.'s wisdom and experience are welcome assets to Louisiana's conservation district program.

Herb Bourque, public affairs specialist, SCS, Alexandria, La.

Serving the Community

Community Center Comes To Idaho

RESIDENTS FROM the rural Idaho towns of Hamer, Mud Lake, Montevieu, and Terreton can enjoy the benefits of a senior citizen's center, thanks in large part to community cooperation and the spirited efforts of the High Country Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council.

The RC&D council determined community interest through a tele-

phone survey which showed strong community support for the center. Council member Cecil Allen of the Mud Lake Soil Conservation District in Jefferson County spearheaded the drive for the center.

A committee was formed to coordinate and oversee building activities. Due to its central location, Mud Lake was selected for the new center.

Community dinners, auctions, raffles, and garage sales proved helpful, but the funds generated fell far short of the projected \$100,000 that was needed for the new building.

The High Country RC&D Council helped the committee apply for nonprofit status from the Internal

Revenue Service. Approval gave the committee eligibility for grants.

Two months later, after several rejections for funding, the group requested a block grant from the East Central Idaho Planning and Development Association. This time news from the Idaho Block Grant Committee was positive: the Mud Lake Senior Citizens' Corporation received a grant of \$64,900. The Mud Lake Lions Club donated an acre of land for a building site.

The entire project was completed in less than 2 years.

L. LaMon Baird, High Country RC&D coordinator, retired, SCS, Rexburg, Idaho



Residents from rural Idaho towns near Mud Lake enjoy a meal together in their senior citizen center. The center became a reality due to community cooperation and the help of the High Country Resource Conservation Development (RC&D) Council. (Tamara Egbert photo)

First State RC&D Helps Serenity House

THE FIRST STATE Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council in Delaware helped a local citizens group establish a halfway house in Kent County for recovering alcoholics and drug dependents.

The original vision of Serenity Place began when Jack Navert suggested to his wife Gayle that there was a critical need for an extended-stay facility.

The Naverts approached their State legislator and requested that a facility be located in Kent County. As a result, legislation was introduced in the Delaware General Assembly to set aside funds for the specified facility.

Then the Naverts sought assistance from the First State RC&D Council. "The RC&D council provided valuable expertise," said Gayle Navert. "We could not do without their assistance."

The council provided technical assistance that helped to stream-

line initial procedures and secure State funds for the halfway house.

Grover Biddle, First State RC&D Council president, refers to the RC&D role as a "bridge." "We worked with a dedicated citizens group who saw a need for the community-based project. As a result, Kent County, Del., now has its first halfway house for those dependent on alcohol and/or drugs."

Serenity Place is a 6-bedroom house which can accommodate 40 adult male recovering alcoholics or alcohol/drug dependents per year. Residents must be at least 18 years old. House rules are strict. Men must hold a job within 2 weeks of their arrival and sign in and out daily. Serenity Place is located within walking distance of downtown Dover.

"There is a need for a women's facility, and we would like to establish one in a couple of years if this venture goes well," said Gayle Navert.

Jack Navert, now a certified drug and alcohol counselor, works daily with persons housed at Serenity Place. The concept is to provide a supportive, supervised living environment with counseling and encouragement. Involvement in appropriate treatment programs is maintained in order to continue the recovery process.

"Some people come to Serenity Place because they have no place else to go. They need a place to add stability to their lives," Biddle said. "Serenity Place offers a gradual move back into society."

Dorothy Abbott-Donnelly, public affairs specialist, SCS, Dover, Del.



Gayle Navert, cofounder of Serenity Place, discusses the facility with First State RC&D Coordinator Sherwood Morgan. (Dorothy Abbott-Donnelly photo)



Serenity Place, a halfway house located in Kent County, Del., is a 6-bedroom house that can serve 40 adult male recovering alcoholics each year. (Dorothy Abbott-Donnelly photo)

"Our goal is to give all 50,000 BOCES students the same sense of accomplishment that comes from learning by doing," Rieger said.

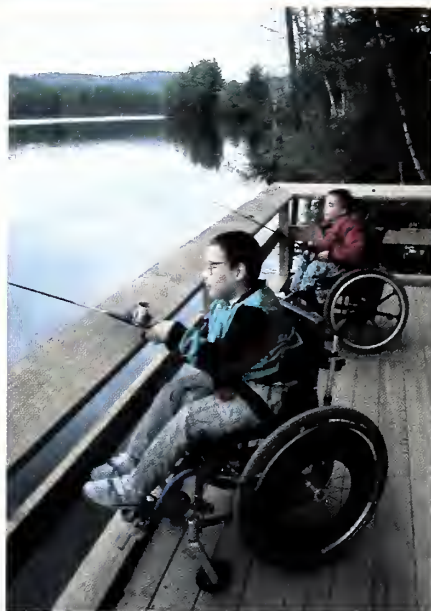
New Center Offers Youth Life Skills

WITH THE OPENING of the Charles Lathrop Pack Environmental Education Center in Warren County, N.Y., thousands of students can learn firsthand about Adirondack forestry, geology, history, and ecology.

The project was made possible by a joint venture involving the Greater Adirondack Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council, the State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Sciences and Forestry at Syracuse, and two district Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

For more than 60 years, Pack Demonstration Forest was a living laboratory for college students studying forestry. Then in 1990, the SUNY College of Forestry decided to move its education program elsewhere. The Greater Adirondack RC&D Council, brought local educators, and the college together and developed a method to retain the site as a permanent learning center for local students.

Students with physical disabilities particularly appreciate the new center. Situated on 2,800 acres of State-administered land,



Students enjoy the handicapped-accessible fishing pier at the Charles Lathrop Pack Environmental Education Center in Warren County, N.Y. (SCS photo)

the facility already has a handicapped-accessible fishing pier with a viewing platform overlooking Pack Forest Lake and a 1-1/4-mile nature trail. The center is one of the few facilities of its kind in the region that is easily handicapped-accessible.

Last summer BOCES held their first day-and-overnight outdoor programs for 120 students, including some with physical, mental, or emotional disabilities. Participants enjoyed swimming, canoeing, water safety, and tree and leaf identification activities.

Students, organizers, and teachers thought it was great, said John Rieger, RC&D chairman and a member of the BOCES Board of Education. "The students learned new skills, increased their self-es-

teem, and had a terrific time. Our goal is to give all 50,000 BOCES students the same sense of accomplishment that comes from learning by doing," Rieger said.

Plans for expanding the center include building an interpretive center with educational exhibits about oldtime logging in the Adirondacks.

The RC&D council will help develop additional nature trails, instructional stations, interpretive programs, and other educational activities. BOCES will use the center for outdoor education activities with elementary and secondary students in the five-county area it serves. The college will continue its forest management, research, and public demonstration programs at the site.

As a result of the council's efforts, the State legislature in 1990 approved \$15,000 worth of improvements and expansions to the existing facilities.

In addition, the Saratoga and Warren BOCES districts will contribute \$100,000 to help prepare audiovisual and curriculum materials specifically for Pack Forest in support of the program.

Teachers who have been to the Pack Forest Environmental Center agree that there is no substitute for real-life learning. Being able to see, touch, and smell the natural world that surrounds us helps us to unlock the mysteries of science better than any textbook ever could.

Patricia A. Paul, public affairs specialist, SCS, Syracuse, N.Y.

Flood Control Promoted

COMMUNITIES in Puerto Rico's Guanajibo River Valley are safer places to live in now. Flash flooding has been controlled, more agricultural land is available for different uses, and new factories are offering employment.

The conclusion of the first phase of a flood control project coordinated by the El Caribe Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council has brought

benefits to the area in southwestern Puerto Rico.

Some 7 years ago, representatives from the cities of Sabana Grande, San German, and Hormigueros asked the RC&D council for assistance because frequent flash floods threatened public safety. Losses often occurred to crops, houses, and government facilities such as schools, roads, and bridges.

To improve the river channel flow, replace bridges, and construct some new roads, the council estimated the cost of the first phase of flood control work at more than \$3 million.

The council turned to the Department of the Army's Corps of Engineers for construction help. Other contacts with the Common-

wealth Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Sabana Grande municipal government led to contributions for a preliminary project study and a later sharing of construction machinery.

The Corps of Engineers adopted the flood control measures recommended by the council and allocated funds for project work. The final cost of this phase was \$3.1 million. A public ceremony in September 1989 marked the conclusion of the project's first phase. Over the next years, the Corps will continue with other phases of the flood control project.

With the first phase finished, several electronics factories relocated to the Sabana Grande area and a new electronics business came into being. A sugar cane growing operation also moved to the area. In all, the council estimates that the flood control project led to the creation of some 5,000 new jobs.

Angel Gonzalez, El Caribe RC&D coordinator, SCS, Anasco, P.R.



Construction for flood control is shown in Puerto Rico's Guanajibo River Valley. (Angel Gonzalez photo)

...RC&D Council has proposed...to commemorate Smokey and his mission [with] a postage stamp, signs...a museum on the history of firefighting...a parade, a Smokey Bear hot-air balloon, and a very large birthday cake.

New Mexico Celebration To Honor Smokey

SMOKEY BEAR is the well known and loved national symbol of the fire prevention program of USDA's Forest Service. What isn't so well known is that his birthplace is near Capitan, a small mountain community in southern New Mexico.

The South Central Mountain Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Area Council offered to get the public's ideas on how to mark the 50-year celebration of the Smokey symbol in his hometown, and the Forest Service accepted the plan.

The idea of the information-gathering project came from RC&D council member Barbara Luna, district forester with the State Forestry and

Resources Conservation Division. Planning for the 1994 celebration touches on two of the council's goals: to increase tourism to the area in an effort to improve the economy and to upgrade nearby Smokey Bear State Park.

After a forest fire in 1944, Smokey was found clinging to a tree in the mountains near Capitan.

Smokey then moved to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., where he immediately became a national celebrity. In 1976, after a long and productive life, he was buried in the State park that bears his name.

In meetings with the Capitan Village Council and Chamber of Commerce, the RC&D council has proposed numerous ways to commemorate Smokey and his mission, such as a postage stamp, signs, and a museum on the history of firefighting. The birthday celebration may include a parade, a Smokey Bear hot-air balloon, and a very large birthday cake.

"This celebration could put Capitan, as well as the region and State, on the map," according to Frank Warth, mayor of Capitan. "We need to increase tourism and improve our State park, and this may be the best way to do it."

Project planning is in full swing. The South Central Mountain RC&D Council is looking forward to a successful birthday bash.

Howard Shanks, South Central Mountain RC&D coordinator, SCS, Carrizozo, N. Mex.



Hawaii RC&D Helps Battle Plant Pest

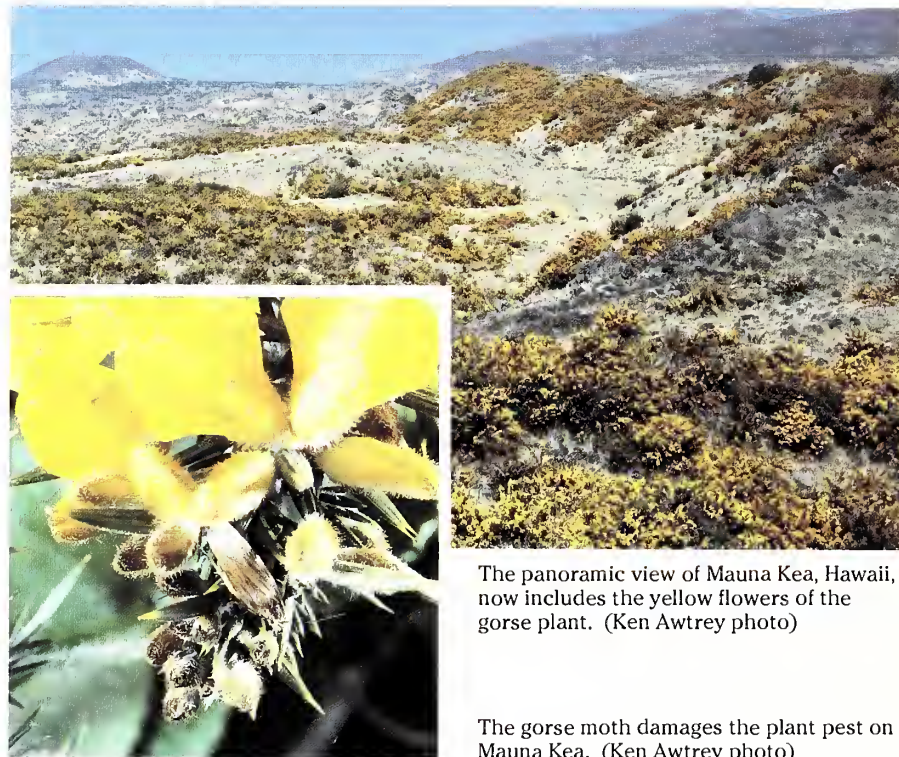
NEW PLANTS and animals regularly arrive in Hawaii, flourish in the tropical climate, and many times become pests. One major objective of the Big Island Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council is control of such pests.

The gorse plant, *Ulex europaeus*, is an invader that competes fiercely with native Hawaiian species and ecosystems. To defeat this plant pest, the Big Island RC&D Council formed the Hawaii Gorse Control Committee. The committee is researching methods of biological control as its primary weapon.

A number of insects are used to attack gorse. For effective biological control, a complex of three to five insects is needed to destroy different parts of the plant.

Release of the gorse seed weevil was effective on Mauna Kea, Hawaii, the "Big Island," rapidly spreading to all parts of the gorse infestation. And on Maui, weevils now destroy between 80 and 90 percent of gorse seed, reducing the plant's spread to new areas.

Another weapon introduced to the fight is the gorse moth. In 1989, the State of Hawaii released about 10,000 of these insects on Maui and Hawaii. Surveys in 1990 show the insect is now well estab-



The panoramic view of Mauna Kea, Hawaii, now includes the yellow flowers of the gorse plant. (Ken Awtrey photo)

The gorse moth damages the plant pest on Mauna Kea. (Ken Awtrey photo)

lished at higher elevations on both islands.

The moth's larvae feed on gorse, consuming new shoots and foliage each year. In about 5 years, when a higher moth population is built up, the continued destruction of new foliage should greatly weaken the gorse plants and prevent their spread. Other insects used against gorse are the gorse gall weevil and the gorse thrip.

Funding for the gorse control program comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the counties of Hawaii and Maui, the USDA's Forest Service, and the State of Hawaii. The State of Oregon, which also has a gorse infestation, contributes a small sum each year.

The committee estimates the research will take 6 years to com-

plete, at a cost of \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year. It hopes to have a complex of five established insects in that time and, within another 5 years, to have the weed brought under control.

Francis Pacheco, Big Island RC&D Council president, is chairman of the Hawaii Gorse Control Committee. Other committee members are representatives of the Mauna Kea Soil and Water Conservation District, Department of Hawaiian Homes Lands, University Extension Service, USDA's Forest Service, Hawaiian Department of Land and Natural Resources, and concerned residents.

Ken Awtrey, Big Island RC&D coordinator, SCS, Kamuela, Hawaii

Red Flag Alert in Arizona

Many Arizonans have jumped from the frying pan into the fire. To escape the heat of Phoenix, some city residents have built summer homes in the nearby mountains of Arizona's national forests. Because of the high fire potential in these areas, they do so at a high risk.

The 1990 Dude Fire in the Tonto National Forest is an example of what can happen if fires get the upper hand. The blaze caused 6 deaths, destroyed 54 homes, and led to the evacuation of 1,500 citizens. The cost of suppressing the fire totaled \$8.5 million.

The Little Colorado River Plateau Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council began a Red Flag Alert measure to reduce the fire threat to residents. The council will distribute 75 windsocks, 15,000 brochures, and 500 posters throughout the district to warn of "Red Flag Alert" days.

National forest supervisors designate a "Red Flag Alert" to warn of potential fire hazards. On these days, windsocks and radio broadcasts spread the fire danger message.

"We are excited about this measure because of the involvement of Federal and State agencies in cooperation with the Arizona State Land Department and 26 rural fire departments," said A.J. Freeman, president of the RC&D council.

As part of the effort, rural fire departments launched a fire prevention awareness program in local schools. The RC&D council's

brochures accompany the educational program. Council posters also alert residents to potential danger.

Rafael Guerrero, Little Colorado RC&D coordinator, SCS, Holbrook, Ariz.

Garden Project Blooms

Fresh vegetables, flowers, and smiles were all results of a garden project sponsored by the Kings Mark Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council and the Middletown Housing Authority.

Last year, apartment residents of Long River Village in Middletown, Conn., wanted to beautify their surroundings by planting gardens. But they found that they needed more than their determination to tackle yards with compacted soil and stewn with litter. They needed seeds and seedlings, pots, potting soil, and garden tools.

To fill that need, council members under the direction of Steve Driver, council president, rounded up donations from area greenhouses, vocational schools, and agricultural centers.

"Everyone wanted to see the community enthusiasm nourished," said Eleanor Gale, who was master gardener on the project. "Local schools and businesses did what they could to encourage it."

Driver noted of the project, "The council has a strong interest in working with inner-city families and children. Instead of the well-packed, trodden soil they were

used to, we were able to help them have plants at their doorsteps."

A 4-H group was formed as one result of the community project. Also, there is strong interest among neighbors in continuing and expanding the project each year.

"They know what they need and they're motivated," said Gale. "It is gratifying that despite all of the obstacles, we can help them produce results."

Alyssa DeVito, public affairs specialist intern, SCS, Storrs, Conn.

SCS, NEA Launch Landscape Project

The Soil Conservation Service and the National Endowment for the Arts are combining equal funds for a pilot program in landscape design. Chosen for the 2-year pilot are Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) areas in the Oconee River Area, Georgia; the Golden Hills Area, Iowa; and the Castlelands Area, Utah.

Landscape architects will help area RC&D councils demonstrate how design can enhance the environment and economy of rural regions. Each area council is assisted by an RC&D coordinator assigned by SCS, with back-up technical assistance provided by State, regional, and national SCS offices.

"This new program with NEA," said SCS Chief William Richards, "will demonstrate the benefits of adding the professional skills of landscape architects to the team approach each RC&D area fosters. Among the results we anticipate

are better resource management, expanded recreational opportunities, and increased tourism."

Streambank protection, park and trail development, salinity control, and the enhancement of scenic byways are types of projects proposed for the program. Landscape architects will involve local citizens in evaluating the rural landscape, using image processing to simulate the visual impact of different development options, and designing specific landscape improvements for council projects.

Still a Beauty After All These Years

What's 160 years old and still beautiful?...the Philadelphia Flower Show, the oldest and largest in the Nation, produced by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

This year's show, which ran March 10-17 in the Philadelphia Civic Center, featured a cypress swamp and a cabin in the pine barrens, among many dozens of exhibits. It also included prize-winning African violets in tiny pots and pictures painstakingly created from dried flower petals.

The Soil Conservation Service exhibit, *Our Environment Begins With Your Yard*, stressed the value of an environmentally sensitive yard. Such a yard uses less water and fewer pesticides and fertilizers, and needs less maintenance.

SCS'ers staffing the exhibit estimated that they talked to some 28,000 people, and that 90 percent of the show's 240,000 visitors passed by the SCS exhibit.

Saving the Land

SCS Chief William Richards was a featured speaker at the March

Washington, D.C., conference "Saving the Land That Feeds America," sponsored by the American Farmland Trust (AFT).

Founded in 1981, AFT is a national nonprofit membership organization dedicated to preserving farmland.

Richards stated that the 1985 farm bill had sent two very strong messages: first, that the American public is becoming impatient with purely voluntary conservation programs unless they work and, second, that the public has resolved not to subsidize farming practices that erode the soil and diminish wetlands.

"Our goal," he stressed, "will be to help farmers make economically and environmentally sound resource-management decisions that have the confidence of society. To that end, one of our most important challenges right now is to help farmers meet the conservation provisions of the '85 and '90 farm bills, especially conservation compliance."

More than 300 Federal and private sector soil and water conservationists, land use experts, agricultural economists, and wildlife managers attended the 2-day conference.

Other speakers included USDA Assistant Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment James Moseley and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator William K. Reilly.

Shirley Foster Fields, public affairs specialist, SCS, Washington, D.C.



The Soil Conservation Service exhibit at the Philadelphia Flower Show showed visitors how planting and maintaining a "healthy" yard can help the environment.

1990 Farm Bill: Environmental and Consumer Provisions

By the Center For Resource Economics

The Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act (FACTA) of 1990, commonly called the 1990 farm bill, will form the statutory foundation of U.S. agricultural policy for much of the coming decade. The law covers all of the traditional agricultural policy topics, from commodity price and income support to agricultural trade, from food stamps to research.

Fourteen of the 25 titles in the 1990 bill, however, contain provi-

sions that deal in varying degrees with environmental and consumer concerns. The Center For Resource Economics (1718 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Suite 300, Washington, DC 20009) prepared this two-volume guidebook in 1991 to make it easier for anyone with an interest in these subjects to find and interpret the relevant provisions of FACTA. The two volumes were designed to be used together.

Volume I, Statutory Language (200 pages), reproduces statutory language from FACTA that the Center considers directly relevant to environmental or consumer protection. It also includes title XII (the conservation title) of the 1985 farm bill (the Food Security Act of 1985) in its entirety, for it is heavily amended by FACTA.

Volume II, Detailed Summary (132 pages), summarizes all provisions and excerpts of significant statements of the House-Senate "Managers" in the Conference Report.

The guidebook's two-volume format includes readable summary language, enabling readers to quickly understand the statutory language.

The table of contents, the same for both volumes, makes provisions and explanations easy to find. And there is a complete listing of all FACTA titles and sections.

The two-volume set is \$24.95 plus tax (if applicable) and \$3.00 postage/handling from Island Press, Box 7, Covelo, CA 95428; 1-800-828-1302. Discounts are available on bulk orders.

Shading Our Cities: A Resource Guide for Urban and Community Forests

Edited by Gary Moll and Sara Ebenreck, American Forestry Association

Soaring summer temperatures, polluted air, block after block of steel and glass—America's cities can be unhealthful and sometimes unpleasant places in which to live. Planting trees is the solution presented in this 1989 book.

This handbook is designed to help neighborhood groups, local officials, and planners develop urban forestry projects.

"Shading Our Cities" strives to change the way we look at trees in our communities. The aesthetic benefits of parks, tree-lined streets, and open, green community spaces are obvious, but trees can also significantly reduce energy demand, improve air quality, protect water supplies, and contribute to healthier living conditions.

Key features include: practical measures to save existing trees; advice about getting urban forestry programs started in local communities; and profiles of suc-

cessful projects in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, New York, Atlanta, and other cities.

This 329-page book is available from Island Press, Box 7, Covelo, CA 95428; 1-800-828-1302. Paperback cost is \$19.95; clothbound is \$34.95. For details on the availability of other natural resource publications, contact Island Press, 1718 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20009; 202/232-7933.

New in Print is prepared by **Paul G. DuMont**, associate editor, *Soil & Water Conservation News*.

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Conservation Calendar

September	17-19	National Water Exhibition, International Water and Effluent Treatment Exhibition '91, Birmingham, England
	21-25	Rally 91, The Land Trust Alliance, Waterville Valley, N.H.
	28-Oct. 2	Association of State Dam Safety Officials' Annual Conference, San Diego, Calif.
October	15-17	National Stewardship Conference, Duluth, Minn.
	16-18	Toxic Air Pollutants from Mobile Sources, Air and Water Management Association, Detroit, Mich.
	19-22	Association of Science-Technology Centers, Louisville, Ky.
November	6-9	Minority Participation in Forestry & Forest Related Sciences Symposium, Huntsville, Ala.
	10-13	12th Annual International Irrigation Exposition and Technical Conference, San Antonio, Tex.
	14-16	64th National FFA Convention, Kansas City, Mo.
	22-25	National Council for the Social Studies Annual Meeting, Wash., D.C.
December	5-7	National Science Teachers Association Fall Meeting, Reno, Nev.
	17-20	American Society of Agricultural Engineers International Winter Meeting, Chicago, Ill.